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INCONSTANT COASTS

BY HENRY BELLAMANN

Year after year
I have seen the spring
Spread like a green tide
Through the woods;
I have watched its waves
Shatter at tree-top to thin leaves,
And foam in sudden flowers:
Year by year the exquisite frailty
Of fluttering spray
And quick melting petals—
Year by year
All that eager questing wearies:
Year by year
Green and foam settle and sink
And sweep back again
To the depths
From whence they came.

I have seen the clouds arise,
Day after day,
At behest of genii builders of the sky;
I have seen them sway and struggle
Toward an ultimate perfection—
Incredible and still unguessed.
Day by day they break,
And the ocean whirls their color
In its dark—
Strewing their fragile splendor
Twinkling on the sand.

. . . And the stars:
Nightly they move
From violet pavilions
Seeking their final station—
Their terminate design:
All the bright confusion
Trailing on the way
Of some far fulfillment.

It is a restless river,
Or a sea—
Spring and clouds and stars—
Whose tides draw ever and ever
From silver-light infinity
To these inconstant coasts,
Striving to mould some shape
Unknown to us,
Striving to sound some music
Strange to us.

But the moving crystal breaks—
Turns back—
And all along the rocks are shells,
Delicate pale shells
Whose fantasy
Hints of fairy land,
Whose faltering slight music
Tells of ceaseless thunder
In the deep.

It is a restless, changing river,
Or a sea—
Clouds and spring
And stars.